

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 PM-03 NSCE-00 HA-02
L-01 INR-05 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 DODE-00 PA-01 SSO-00
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O 162200Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5013
INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3328

LIMDIS

PANAMA FOR ROBERT PASTOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PINS, DR
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT BALAGUER

1. I MET WITH PRESIDENT BALAGUER TODAY AT NOON AS
SCHEDULED. WE SPENT NEARLY AN HOUR COVERING THE CONCERNS OF THE
U.S. AS SET FORTH IN STATE 152080 AND 140319 AND BALAGUER'S
ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT SITUATION.

2. BALAGUER OPENED THE CONVERSATION BY REFERRING TO THE
GREAT SURGE OF RUMORS AND WORRIES WHICH HAD DEVELOPED ABOUT THE
CURRENT SITUATION IN THE DR.
HE TOOK THE OCCASION TO SCOFF AT RUMORS THAT HE WOULD BE
LEAVING THE COUNTRY. HE SAID THAT HE WOULD TURN OVER
POWER ON AUGUST 16 AND WOULD RETIRE. HE HAD NO IMMEDIATE
PERSONAL INTEREST, THEREFORE, IN THE OUTCOME OF THE
CURRENT ELECTIONS. IN ANY EVENT, HE SAW THE PRESENT
PROCESS NOT AS CHALLENGING THE NATIONAL RESULTS OF THE
ELECTIONS BUT AS APPLYING THE NORMAL CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESSES
OF THE COUNTRY IN ORDER TO DETERMINE THE VALIDITY OF CHALLENGES
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TO THE RESULTS OF THE VOTING FOR CERTAIN MUNICIPAL AND CONGRESS-
IONAL OFFICES.

3. PRESIDENT BALAGUER, FOR THE FIRST TIME THAT I HAVE SEEN,
EVINced SOME SLIGHT IRRITATION AT THE MAH CONCERNS ABOUT THE
ELECTORAL PROCESSES WHICH WERE BEING EXPRESSED. THE PROCESS,
HE EMPHASIZED, HAD BEEN AND WAS BEING CARRIED OUT IN COM-

PLIANCE WITH CONSTITUTIONAL PROCEDURES. I EXPLAINED TO HIM THAT THE CONCERN OF THE U.S. DID NOT LIE IN A CONSTITUTIONAL LEGAL PROCESS BEING CARRIED OUT, BUT IN THE POSSIBILITY OF A SUBORNING OF THIS PROCESS. THE DEPARTURE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JCE AND OF ONE OF THE JCE TECHNICIANS, AS WELL AS THE UNUSUAL SEARCH FOR FOREIGN EXPERTS TO LOOK INTO THE ELECTORAL COMPUTATION PROCESS, HAD ADDED FUEL TO THE SUSPICIONS THAT ALREADY EXISTED. BALAGUER REPLIED TO THIS THAT HE HAD FULL CONFIDENCE IN THE IMPARTIALITY OF THE SUBSTITUTE CHAIRMAN OF THE JCE AND IN THE FUNCTIONING OF THE JCE ITSELF AND THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE A DEPARTURE FROM THE LEGAL NORMS UNDER WHICH THE JCE OPERATES. THE REASON FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S STEPPING DOWN WAS OBVIOUS-HE HAD EXPRESSED AN OPINION ON THE RESULTS OF A CASE WHICH WOULD BE BROUGHT BEFORE HIS "TRIBUNAL" FOR DECISION. THE OTHER DEVELOPMENTS WERE EQUALLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH DUE PROCESS.

4. I EXPLAINED TO THE PRESIDENT AGAIN THE GREAT INTEREST THAT THE U.S. HAS IN THE FRUITION OF THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, WHICH BALAGUER HIMSELF HAD DONE SO MUCH TO GET UNDERWAY. THIS IS WHY ANY IMPEDIMENT TO THIS PROCESS WOULD HAVE SUCH SERIOUS EFFECTS ON THE WARM RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES. BALAGUER THEN ASKED IN MEASURED TERMS WHY WE DIDN'T PUT PRESSURE ON SOME OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE HEMISPHERE WHERE DEMOCRACY IS IN SERIOUS TROUBLE, ESPECIALLY IN NICARAGUA AND HAITI. I EXPLAINED THAT WE MADE OUR FEELINGS KNOWN
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IN THE WAYS WE BELIEVED TO BE MOST EFFECTIVE IN ANY PARTICULAR CASE AND THAT THE DISTANCE HE HIMSELF HAD BROUGHT THE D.R. ALONG ON THE ROAD TO DEMOCRACY HAD PLACED HIS COUNTRY IN THE ROLE OF A FAVORITE SISTER ABOUT WHOSE VIRTUE WE WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED. HE LAUGHED AT THIS AND SAID HE THOUGHT HE UNDERSTOOD.

5. I TOLD BALAGUER THAT ONE OF THE THINGS THAT WORRIED US WAS THE GREAT CONCERN IN THE SOLID INTELLECTUAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCLES OF THE COUNTRY THAT AN INDEFINITE CONTINUATION OF THIS PERIOD OF INDECISION COULD RESULT IN ECONOMIC CHAOS. HE QUESTIONED ME ABOUT WHAT PEOPLE THESE WERE AND APPEARED TO BE ESPECIALLY INTERESTED IN THIS ASPECT OF OUR CONVERSATION. IN THIS CONNECTION I TOLD HIM THAT SUCH PEOPLE WERE ALSO CONCERNED THAT THIS PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY COULD SPAWN ILL-CONSIDERED ACTION BY SECTORS OF THE MILITARY. BALAGUER SAID IN ESSENCE NOT TO WORRY ABOUT THE MILITARY. HE DID NOT BELIEVE THAT ANYTHING WOULD HAPPEN FROM THAT SIDE SINCE HE CONSIDERED HIS CONTROL INTACT AND DIVISIONS WITHIN THE MILITARY IN ANY EVENT RULED OUT ANY CONCERTED EFFORT ON THEIR PART.

6. I TOLD THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THE PICHARDO VISIT AND WHO HAD SENT HIM, AS WELL AS ABOUT BELLO ANDINO'S LETTER TO

AMBASSADOR HURWITCH, NOTING THESE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE VARIOUS LITTLE SIGNS OF POLITICAL FRAYING THAT WERE ADDING TO WASHINGTON'S PREOCCUPATION. HE DISMISSED PICHARDO AS A FOOL TO WHOM NO ATTENTION SHOULD BE PAID AND SAID HE HAD GIVEN PICHARDO NO AUTHORITY TO REPRESENT HIM. HE DID NOT COMMENT EITHER ON NIVAR OR ON THE HURWITCH LETTER.

7. THROUGHOUT THE CONVERSATION, BALAGUER MADE CLEAR THAT HE INTENDS TO INSIST ON A FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE LEGAL PROCEDURE WHEREVER THE REFORMISTA PARTY COSIDERS A CHALLENGE TO BE CALLED FOR. HE SAID THE PRD WOULD NO DOUBT DO THE SAME. IT WAS UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS PROCESS WAS TAKING SO LONG, HE COMMENTED, BUT HIS UNSWERVING VIEW WAS THAT THIS PROCESS MUST BE ALLOWED TO PROCEED, EVEN IT IS REQUIRED SEVERAL
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MORE WEEKS FOR THE JCE TO PROCESS ALL OF THE CHALLENGES. EACH SIDE WOULD HAVE A CHANCE TO PRESENT ITS CASE BEFORE THE JCE TRIBUNAL AND THE LATTER'S RULINGS WOULD BE RESPECTED. UNTIL THE JCE HAD SPOKEN, ANY EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN WERE PREMATURE. HE SAID HE WAS AWARE OF THE PRESSURES THAT WERE BEING EXERTED NOT ONLY IN WASHINGTON BUT ELSEWHERE AND THAT HE SIMPLY COULD NOT THINK OF ANY FURTHER RESPONSE HE COULD PROVIDE TO THESE CONCERNS.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 5014

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA NIACT IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SANTO DOMINGO 3328

LIMDIS

8. COMMENT: BALAGUER APPEARED CALM AND COLLECTED.

HE APPEARS TO HAVE STAKED OUT HIS GROUND AND WILL
PROBABLY NOT BE EASILY MOVED FROM IT. I BELIEVE WE HAVE
MADE CLEAR WHY THE U.S. IS CONCERNED AND WHAT THE
RESULTS WOULD BE OF SUBORNING OF THE OVERALL ELECTION
RESULTS. THE CONVERSATION HELPED TO CLARIFY
HIS OWN VIEWS AND PLANS AND REITERATED HIS INTENTION TO LIMIT THE
ELECTION CHALLENGE TO INDIVIDUAL LOCAL OFFICES.
THE JCE PROCESS WILL HAVE TO BE WATCHED CLOSELY AS WE
HAVE BEEN DOING. THE LONGER-RUN DANGER IS THAT THE PROCESS WILL BE
ALLOWED TO DRAG ON TO WHERE THE CONTINUED UNCERTAINTY
BECOMES MORE THAN SOME ELEMENT IN THIS COMPLEX SITUATION CAN BEAR,
WHETHER IT IS THE PRD, THE MILITARY OR THE ECONOMY.
BALAGUER SEEMS TO BE WILLING TO RISK THESE UNCERTAINTIES AND WHAT HIS
ACTION MAY BE TO DEAL WITH THE SITUATION ARE IMPOSSIBLE
TO PREDICT. SUCH ACTIONS WILL AT LEAST BE TAKEN IN FULL
KNOWLEDGE OF U.S. CONCERNS AND OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE
SITUATION.
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